PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS.

Essay read at College Commencement, Ashland, 1884.
BY L. W. DITCH.

If there is any one principle in the guidance or human affairs which is more clearly set forth upon the pages of history than another, it is this, that the over zeal for a good cause has more often led to its defeat than all the combined evils with which it had to contend. It was this over-zeal that defeated for so many years the Puritan in the reformation of England. It is this same blind zeal which is today leading our high schools into the vortex of ruin. It is not that we wish to block the wheels of educational progress, or for a moment eclipse the glory of our public school system, that we take this position. But what we do want is to remove the scales from the eyes of the blind zealots who are trying to make our common schools do too much, and by trying to do too much are accomplishing nothing. For it is quite certain that they are not now doing what the sanguine founders of the common school system hoped they would do.

For a full understanding of the question we must have a clear idea of the word *education*. It is certain that education must mean something more essential than merely knowing certain things, or to have passed through a certain school curriculum. It can mean nothing less than the leading out, the developing and the training into fitness for coping with life's problems the native faculties and capacities of the pupil. When this is done, through whatever process, the pupil is educated; so long as this is not done, whatever may have been studied or whatever may be known the work of education is not accomplished.

It would seem then that the practical meaning of the word should be determined by the nature of the person to be educated and by the question "What is he being educated for?" The St. Bernard dog who should understand the art of the setter, but know nothing of the Alps, or how to lead the lost traveller through the storm would be poorly educated for his life work. Is it any better for a man to be trained into a taste and fitness for some other path than that his feet must follow? The first thing that any boy or girl needs upon coming into the world is to be trained into an ability to earn an honest living. This is the prime condition for anything farther or better. Therefore it ought to be the first concern for any scheme of common education.

Next to this ability to earn an honest living, should be the training into an ability to distingnish the true from the false in the great questions of practical life. The world is a great battlefield of opposing forces in society, in politics, in morals, and in religion. Every man and every woman must practically take sides and so help or hurt mankind. A man trained to solve these practical problems of life, to care for and find truth, to know the right and prefer to do it, to do something to make the world as a place to live in a little easier, happier and better; such a man is educated, because to do these things is what a man is in this kind of a world for.

Having now a clear idea of what education is, we are prepared to investigate the right of the state in this matter. The accepted principle both in State legislatures and in the national congress is that public legislation for personal or private ends is unjust and inadmissable. This is the basis of all equal taxation. To illustrate this point, suppose the General Assembly of Ohio should levy a tax upon the inhabitants of said commonwealth and then use it for the exclusive benefit of Hamilton county, it would be considered practical theft. Nor would men's judgment be reversed by any plea of worthiness or even need. Highway robbery is not justified by appropriating the proceeds to the use of a church or a hospital. Whenever public money is to be expended in the construction of local works, the State must justify the act by demonstrating that the public is benefitted to the full extent of the money so expended. This then is the principle: public money is to be expended only for the public good. The plea of parental right in the education of a child, is set aside upon the ground that the child is a unit of society, and that society has an interest in his intelligence and character. On the other hand it is held that the state should furnish the means of knowing whatever is to be known. This implies the kindergarten at one end and the university at the other and all the intervening grades, all to be paid out of the public fund. To justify this enormous outlay of money one of two propositions must be established. First, that the majority of the children of those who pay tax both will and can avail themselves of this long course of study; second that the general public is benafitted by those who do, to make the expenditure pay.

To sustain this latter proposition it must be shown that the few who do go through with what is called the higher education could not obtain it in some other way less expensive to the public; and also that the common education of the majority does not suffer in the interests of this higher education for the few. It is a well known fact that a very small percentage of those who attend the common schools ever go beyond the Grammar school. We are persuaded that those who do could be better and more economically educated than by the present system. We are also persuaded that the education of the majority suffers, being practically sacrificed to the higher education of the few. To sustain these propositionr we must understand the right which the State has to demand in the way of educating each child If any boy or girl is not instructed so as to earn an honest living, he or she becomes directly or indirectly a public charge. The State, then, has a right in this matter. It is clearly her duty and interest to see that so far as possible this is done. To this end the opportunity of an industrial education should be the aim and essential part of every common school system.

To the end of being prepared to live an honest life it is needful that the child be well grounded in the rudiments of a good English education. Enough of general knowledge to enable him to cast an intelligent vote; this as a matter of self-defense the State has a right to demand. It is the right of the State to see that all its embryo citizens are educated so far as possible into fitness for this independent, honest and intelligent citizenship. But beyond this we do not see what right the State has to go. We have never been able to understand why Mr. C. should be taxed to teach neighbor Jones' boy Latin or higher mathematics or chemistry, more than to buy him a bycicle. His owning a bycicle and the outdoor exercise so gained may be the means of saving his life, and the life so saved may prove a great public blessing. On that chance Mr. Jones would hardly have the face to make the demand of Mr. C. On a chance just as slender, why should he make the former demand which is just as personal in its nature. What is clearly for public good in the way of his education, Mr. Jones has a right to demand of the public assistance to carry through. So far as his personal and private rights are concerned he has no right to ask, only for a clear field and no favor. In departing from this principle Mr. Jones becomes a pauper, taking public charity as readily as though he took soup instead of geomotry.

But, asks some one, "Is it not the glory of our republic that the poor are to be allowed equal chance with the rich?" This is in view of the fact that the rich may avail themselves of private teachers. On this point two things are to be said. First, if this is the obligation of the State in the matter of education, why stop here? Why not apply the principle to houses, pictures, and all the "good things" of life. Secondly, an equal chance for what it is the duty of the State to provide? If it be an equal chance for a successful, contented, useful and happy life it is just that for which we contend. It is that which public schools are not now doing, but what they ought to do.

To sustain our first proposition it is only necessary to present a few figures relative to the subject. In the month of February, 1883, there were in the common schools of our cities 50,000 pupils. Of this number but one half had gone through the primary department and entered the Grammar school, and of the entire number only $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent graduate at the Grammar and enter the High school. This is positive proof that either the majority cannot or will not avail themselves of this course of study. That the former is the true hypothesis is evident because the majority of the parents of those pupils are unable to support their children through such a long course of study, but must send them out into the world to do battle, with their education but half completed; while at the same time those parents must pay tax to support those who do remain, and those who do remain are the very ones the most able to support themselves. Moreover their aims and purposes are purely personal and private ones; desirous of becoming doctors or lawyers they are learning a business by which they hope to win some of the personal prizes of life, and in that respect deserve no more help than the engineer or the carpenter at his work bench.

Why should the one be a public beneficiary any more than the others. If the need of one is greater it is not the one seeking the so-called position. We ask then, if this is justice? Is it right? Is it according to the general principle of equal taxation that those who pay tax should pay it for the support of a system which donates is best buildings, best apparatus, and best paid teachers to what is practically the private and personal training of $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent of its children.

Trans-Missouri Flashes.

Very rainy here of late.

No. 24 BRETHREN'S EVANGELIST is a good number. The editorial on the "Demands of Brethren Church" is quite to the point. So far as human agency is concerned it contains the ONLY remedy.

In order to get "light" from "Christ" we must not "sleep," but be "awake."

God's revelation to men don't always come to us in direct statement, but are presented to our perceptive faculties through types, figures and shadows. Those "types figures and shadows" declare unto us the *facts* of God concerning our race. To a large extent we would have to answer brother Culp from that standpoint. We do not fully agree with the editor that the subject of Jewish restoration is "barren;" but perhaps at present the space in the EVANGELIST should be used in the discussion of subjects needing *immediate* attention. We nevertheless firmly believe that Jewish restoration will soon figure in great prominence among the grandly "living issues" of progressive Christianity. For fear of getting into a too lengthy discussion we will drop the matter right here, by saying to brother Culp that our convictions on this subject are the result, not of any church father's planting," but of personal research, and as part proof of my former assertion would cite brother C. to the last thirteen chapters of Ezekial's prophecy. It was said to the Jews by one of their prophets "Ye are my witnesses," and we firmly believe that that race will very prominently testify to the dethronement of Infidelity.

Be practically loving.

Women have a scriptural right to preach.

Wonder whether the "obligatory" decision is "advice only."

Pride is "Inordinate self esteem."

Be good natured.

True humanity is "not wise in its own conceit."

Hardly anything needs a test of membership any more with some folks except progression.

Be *practically* kind to the poor.

Visit the sick and administer to their wants.

Progression is not given over to the degree of laxity as reported by some, who have no other argument.

Do not stab in the dark.

Some are apeing progressive laxity (as represented from a German Baptist standpoint). But then anything for numbers and to keep up appearance.

Truth will eventually triumph.

Deceptive measures may hinder true progression for a little while.

Dare to confess your wrongs.

Dare condemn error wherever, whenever and in whomsoever found.

Don't place a premium on ignorance.

If *only one* of the "three divisions" is right it must be the Old Order or Progressive order.

Preachers should give themselves to study, so both Scripture and reason teach.

Common sense should guide pulpit manners.

The preacher who studies (?) by loafing had better be hoeing potatoes.

The commonest work is not disgraceful to the most dignified; only nonsensical aristocracy and foppery think differently.

There is great power in pesuasive measures. That power effected earth and heaven when the soul thrilling tragedy took place on Calvary.

"Charity thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity; but rejoiceth in the truth."

Let us all drink deeply into the merits of the above text.

Are my T. M. F. becoming stale, brother editor? If so tell me and I'll stop or change.

W. J. H. BAUMAN.

Morrill, Kans.

A Warning.

We the members of the Amwell congregation, feel it to be a duty that we owe to the cause of Christ, and the Brethren at large to warn you to beware of J. W. Smouse. He sustained the relation of pastor, to the above named congregation, for a period of one year, during that time his conduct was far from that of a Christian minister. He carries with him no certificate of membership from the Amwell church. He asked for none, could not have obtained one had he done so. We hope the Brethren will heed this warning, lest they be imposed upon as we have been.

Signed { JOHN D. HOPPOCK, Elder
JOS. HAINES,
THOL. W. BREWER, } Deacons.
THEO. STEVENSON,

By order of the church,

L. M. HYDE, *Clerk.*

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

BY D. W. REINHART.

I do not propose to consider in detail the multitudinous forms, divisions and sub-divisions of the above subject; but there are several forms to which I would call your special attention, which I suspect few, at least not many, ever contemplate.

God meant something more than mere pecuniary property and the many ways of obtaining it falsely. Do you ever think of those immortal words, "He that steals my purse steals trash, but he that robs me of my good name takes that which does not enrich him, but makes me poor indeed."

Well, you say, how can a man rob another of his good name? Did you ever hear of that word slander? Yes. Then slander no man. "Thou shalt not steal." "Oh, no; I will never slander any one." But, hold on, my brother, did I not hear you say, down at the corner, (oh, that corner,) the other day, that your heard so and so about neighbor Jones, and while you couldn't say, positively, that it was so (but *they* said it was,) and you gave a look and a wink, which said your heart wished it was, and boys, I wish you would tell it around, but don't say I told you.

"Thou shalt not steal.". We don't propose to go into an elaborate argument, but we just want to give you a few things to think of, by way of a start.

"The drunkard shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven." Well, now, what has this got to do with "Thou shalt not steal?" How about the time you offered brother Brown a glass of wine, or your harvest hand a drink of whisky? Do you catch the idea? Did you not help to make a drunkard of him? thus stealing away his senses, his birthright, his soul's salvation? You cannot plead innocency on account of his independence. If you hand a man a pistol with which to kill himself, if you saw a man about to take poison or cut his throat and you made no effort to prevent it, do you think God will hold you guiltless? Will the civil law? No, no; and all nature reverberates, no, no. Again. Do you think God is going to hold you guiltless when he has given you a vote and you cast that vote for a man who you know will grant the sales of whisky, possibly is a manufacturer himself? If you do you are vastly mistaken. God has given you a vote and he calls upon you to cast it for right men, that wise and good rulers may be chosen, that his flock may have peace and grow in numbers.

Now will you please look at the enormity of the sin. 'Tis not a few dollars, but 'tis that of which God said, one is of more value than the whole world. Then, my brother, my sister, my friend, for your own sake, for your children's sake, for the sake of your neighbors, your friends, your country, our blessed religion, think on this matter. Stop!! Put down that glass. "Look not upon the wine when it is red." If you drink it yourself, you steal from yourself, you commit suicide. If you give it to another, you steal from him; you commit murder. "Thou shalt not steal." "Thou shalt not kill." Don't say this does not apply to us members. Have I not seen wine by the pitcher full put down where even the children could and did help themselves, and that in a good old brother's house. It applies with double strength unto those to whom God has committed the care and keeping of his church and country.

"Physician heal thyself." That is what I am trying to do; but we can help one another, and this is our duty. Don't shut yourself up in a shell of indifference and selfishness. The man who lives entirely for himself will one day find himself by himself, utterly alone. God help us to help each other.

Just this very day a lady told me (while her bosom heaved and her heart was mortified) of the misery brought upon her by this demon whisky, and not only herself but the whole family, especially her promising daughter, who has recently embraced Christ, is made the chief sufferer; persecuted by this foul and debasing iniquity, this demon which makes the father turn, not only against himself, but his dear children. And you, my brother, as long as you vote for license, are a sharer in this man's iniquity. Oh, sisters, hand no more wine. May God give sufficient grace to the young lady above referred to. Let us bear each others burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

Happiness consists not in having such and such possessions, but in being fitted to enjoy what we have.

Show me a people whose trade is dishonest, and I will show you a people whose religion is a sham.

The world deals good-naturedly with good-natured people; and I never knew a sulky misanthropist who quarrelled with it, but it was he, and not it, that was wrong.